

CITY OF VERGAS
COUNCIL MINUTES
Vergas Event Center and Zoom
Tuesday, August 8, 2023

The City Council of Vergas met at 6:00 pm, on Tuesday, August 8, 2023, at the Vergas Event Center for a hybrid regular council meeting with the following members present: Mayor Julie Bruhn, Council Members: Bruce Albright , Dean Haarstick, Paul Pinke and Natalie Fischer. Absent: none. Also present: Clerk/Treasurer Julie Lammers, Utilities Superintendent Mike DuFrane, Blaine Green Engineer, Bob Williams of the Frazee-Vergas Forum, Lyle Krieg, Keith Bunkowske, Colleen Hoffman, Ron Beyer, Mackenze Hamm, Adriana Brandon, Grace Hamm and Madalynn Hamm.

Call to Order

Mayor Julie Bruhn called the meeting to order.

Citizens' Concerns

Letter from Robin Hanson regarding City property at 140 E Linden. The council stated this decision has been made.

Agenda Additions and Deletions

Motion by Pinke, seconded by Fischer to approve the agenda with the following additions: Cornerstone Community and Youth Center, Veterans Memorial and Hairy Man Event.

Veteran Memorial

Lyle Krieg requested permission to plant 3 maple trees by the Veteran's Memorial away from the baseball fence. Requested edging around the trees so city employees could easily mow around. Motion by Pinke, seconded by Fischer to allow Krieg to plant maple trees by the veteran's memorial located on city property. Motion passed unanimously. Bruhn asked them to discuss the location of trees with the park advisory board. Krieg stated they would invite them to the area and show them where they are requesting them be placed.

Cornerstone Community and Youth Center

Mackenze Hamm introduced Cornerstone Community and Youth Center. Adriana Brandon, Grace Hamm and Madalynn Hamm shared information on what they enjoyed about the program.

Approval of Consent Agenda

Motion by Pinke, seconded by Fischer to approve the following consent agenda with the removal of the Park Board minutes:

- A. Council Minutes of the July 11, 2023 and July 24, 2023
- B. Bills paid between Council meetings and Council bills totaling \$99,213.59.
- C. Liquor Store bills for July 2023 totaling \$96,857.67.
- D. Late water/sewer bills
- E. 2023 Investment Schedule/Bond Schedule
- F. General Fund Special Revenue Money Market Account
- G. 2023 Statement of Receipts, Disbursements and Balances
- H. American Rescue Plan Funding 2021-2026
- I. Committee Reports - requiring no Council Action
 1. Planning Commission
 - a. Accept Neil Wothe resignation effective Aug. 31, 2023.
 - b. Accept Alexander Ohman as new board member finishing Neil Wothe's term from September - December 2023.
 2. Water and Sewer Committee
 3. Event Center Advisory Board

Motion passed unanimously.

Council discussed Park Board Minutes and asked Lammers to get the following information: attendance of all members, clarify the statement: item 10 all is good, detailed listing of what budget increase includes and what decision has been made regarding port-a-potties and lighting at the beach.

2022 Audit

Colleen Hoffman, Hoffman, Phillip & Knutson, PLLC presented the 2022 audit. Hoffman stated it is a pleasure working with Vergas and enjoys working with Julie Lammers and stated she gives the Council accurate information. Complimented the Council for paying off the 2009 sewer bonds and having committed funds in a savings account for future projects. The city's net worth is 4 million. Bruhn questioned the liquor store being in the hole at the end of the year. Hoffman explained the significant difference is personnel expenses and it should level out as the manager builds the store. Hoffman reviewed table on page 10 of the audit as the residents of the cities pays for expenditures. The water rates may need to slowly raise rates to meet the expenses. Hoffman stated she would send a spreadsheet regarding revenue and expenses, and she will work with Lammers regarding depreciated items. Currently the depreciation is based on the state auditor's recommendations. Mayor Bruhn thanked Hoffman for her work on the audit.

Cannabis

Bruhn received the Otter Tail County ordinance for cannabis use and stated Lammers has provided an ordinance for the City of Vergas for Council Members to review. The ordinance is consistent with Otter Tail County. Motion by Albright, seconded by Pinke adopt the Ordinance regarding Cannabis Public Use and to hold a public hearing regarding ordinance for cannabis at 6 pm on September 12, 2023 at the Vergas Event Center Council Chambers. Motion passed unanimously.

Committee Reports

EDA/HRA

Bruce Albright reviewed the EDA/HRA meeting of August 1, 2023 (minutes available at the Vergas City Office). Bruhn reviewed the specials put on the Sunny Oaks development and the need for development. Eight of the lots will be sold to the City of Vergas HRA and the Otter Tail County HRA has applied for a grant for their three lots to develop into senior housing. Barbara Darcy, Otter Tail County HRA did a nice presentation and Albright will work with Lammers to get the presentation to those who would like to see it. Motion by Albright, seconded by Pinke to forgive parcels 825000990254000, 825000990253000 and 825000990255000 of the Sunny Oaks development of special assessments applied for 2019 utility project. Motion passed unanimously.

Streets, Sidewalks and Yard Waste

Bruce Albright reviewed the EDA/HRA meeting of June 28, 2023 and July 20, 2023 (minutes available at the Vergas City Office). Lammers will invite the current property owners of W Lake Street to the September 12, 2023 to discuss improvements. Blaine Green, Engineer reviewed information on the Keilly Shores Development. The contractor is requesting they shorten up the sanitary sewer on the south end as the plans call for going into someone else's property to remove trees and a fence and we cannot do without an easement. The City and developer do not have an easement. The developer is also asking they make the storm drain shallower and both engineers Jeff Koon and Blaine Green are recommending the City not change the depth of the storm drain. When there is potential for further development, there definitely is. The same depth needs to be there to tie into the storm drains. Green also updated the Council on the Glenn Street extension project, which is making satisfactory progress on the sanitary sewer and water even with the record drawings not being detailed. Difficult to find what is there and what has been installed. Keith Bunkowske stated this is the 3rd development on his property, he is at the end of his property and the city limits. Bunkowske was made aware of the stake on the end of his property and contacted his neighbors and they stated; absolutely no new development would be happening on his property and no work was to be done on his property. The storm drain is 20 feet down

for future development, to get 20 feet down you need to make a huge hole. In 2003 Bunkowske put in a lift station, in 2012 Bunkowske put in a second lift station and now with this project without going so deep he can service all the lots on the plat. Bunkowske requested taking 6 feet one section of a manhole off the sanitary sewer. Bunkowske questioned why he has to fund for the future. Albright stated that some of this has been through planning and zoning and Moore Engineering plans produced the plans. Bunkowske stated that the depth came from the city. Bunkowske requested changing from 20 to 14 feet for the manhole. Albright asked Green for explanation for why the manhole needs to be at 20 feet. Green explained they look at future expansion and what is best for the city. Lift stations are incredibly expensive. Bunkowske asked the city to help pay for this as when Josh Hanson came to the city, they allowed him to not put in water and sewer. Albright explained we need to be deep enough, so sewers do not freeze. Albright stated he did not feel we need to make someone spend a lot of money on something that will probably never happen. Bruhn questioned Green if there was a decision the Council needed to make tonight. Green stated he was asking the Council for direction. Bunkowske stated Tyson, Engineer from Moore stated they should be able resolve this outside of the Council. Council asked Green to work with Bukowski's engineers to work out an agreement or have Lammers call a water and sewer committee meeting.

Staff Reports

Julie Lammers, Clerk-Treasurer

Lammers reviewed an opportunity to work with PaulNet for licensing permits for \$1,500.00 and \$199.00 a month. We can have up to 20 forms for \$199.00 a month. Albright explained that at planning and zoning they have discussed putting all forms together for building on a lot. Discussed many distinct functions of the program. Discussed if permits could tie into our GIS mapping. Albright discussed the concern that we have multiple permits needed when building and it would be great to have one permit, so no permit is missed. Albright will work with Lammers and bring recommendations to the September council meeting.

Mike DuFrane, Utilities Superintendent

Streets – seal coating has been completed. First Street lines will be painted tomorrow. The 2023 F-350 has arrived. Luck and Truck in Winger has offered us \$1,000 for the snowplow truck and would like to put the 2005 Chevy pickup up for sale. DuFrane explained the 2023 Ford is extremely high and we will need to install running boards. Motion by Albright, seconded by Fischer to sell both the snowplow truck and 2005 Chevy pickup. Motion passed unanimously.

Water – Have had some concerns with water on Glen Street. Hydrant has been moved. The generator we have ordered for the water plant will not be able to be installed due to a part for generator is on hold.

Parks – Fence has been completed along the trail.

Hairy Man Event

Lammers requested on behalf of the Hairy Man committee the use of the baseball field for their event on September 30, 2023. They would like to have a beer garden on the baseball field and have requested the city waive the \$125.00 fee. Albright complemented the Vergas Community Club on cleaning up the field after Looney Days. DuFrane explained the only time there are issues is if there is a large amount of rain. Motion by Albright, seconded by Pinke to approve the use of the ballfield weather permitting, allow the beer garden and waive the fee for the beer garden. Motion passed unanimously.

2023 Comprehensive Plan Review

Bruhn provided an update on the comprehensive plan. Albright thanked her for working on this as too many times plans just sit on the shelf. Committees were involved and it showed the community their feedback matters.

2024 Budget

Lammers provided a working proposed budget and asked all council members to review the budget at their committee meetings. Discussed street lighting and additional poles which will affect the budget. Otter Tail power is having an analysis done for poles and street committee will continue to review and

bring a recommendation.

Information & Announcements

Trainings:

1. WCI Rural Democracy Project. September 29-30 and October 6-7, 2023. Offering training (Run4Rural), which is a 1 1/2-day public leadership training program for new, existing and emerging rural leaders and people active in the community whether or not decided to run for public office.
2. Clerks Advanced Academy- Sept 14-15, 2023, Bemidji, MN (Lammers)

Adjournment

The business for which the meeting was called having been completed, the meeting was adjourned at 8:30 pm.

Submitted by,
Julie Lammers, CMC
Vergas City Clerk-Treasurer